

Effects of Stress

Stress is a natural yet complex feeling that many people face each day. Stress can be both good and bad and is defined as a reaction to life's events or situations whether they are big or small. Good stress is often motivating and allows one to problem solve and reach for new limits. On the other hand, bad stress, also known as distress, can negatively affect one's body causing both physical and psychological problems. When we constantly react to stress harmfully, the organs in the body become stressed and are unable to function at optimal levels. As the body begins to breakdown, symptoms such as headaches and depression can become visible and can lead to long term problems. Constant stress can lead one to use coping strategies that are negative, such as substance abuse, in an effort to lessen the pressure. Ironically, these strategies often put increased strain on the body and mind further increasing damaging symptoms.

It is important for people to know and understand positive ways to cope with stress that lessen the impact on the body and the mind. These stress reduction strategies can help to change the way one reacts to stressful situations and increase one's ability to thrive.

Below are some helpful tips you can use when you feel stressed or are faced with a stressful event or situation.

- Engage in activities that you enjoy
- Exercise
- Relax
- Get enough sleep
- Talk to people about your stress
- Develop a positive support network of family, friends and co-workers
- Set aside time for you
- Seek professional help
- Be aware of how stress affects your body
- Eat a healthy diet
- You control the way you react to situations, try to react in a positive way
- Identify what is causing your stress and if possible, remove it
- THINK POSITIVE

Maria Robinson once said "Nobody can go back and start new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending." You are important to your family, friends and community and most importantly, you make a difference in this world. Changing the way you view stress can make all the difference in your life.

Stress does not define you, you define stress!

*This information was taken from the United States Department of Health and Human Services,
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration